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FOX AND CAT-HUNTING—OR CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

In good old times, when the festivities of Christmas were generally kept up in every respectable house in Ireland, the county of Longford was one of the foremost to maintain the national character for hospitality. Among the numerous mansions of the then resident nobility and gentry of that county was Tenelick, the noble seat of the late John, Lord Annaly, Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench. He was a nobleman of large estate, whose hand and heart were ever in unison in promoting the comforts of the poorer of his fellow creatures; and he took much pleasure in assembling his friends around him at that season, which long established custom had consecrated to cheerfulness and festivity. His house was constructed on a very extensive scale; and, exclusive of the usual reception rooms, and the apartments necessary for his family, contained thirty chambers, which, on those occasions, were filled with gentlemen from different parts, the Viceroy not unfrequently making one of the number; and each and all of whom his lordship could supply with a hunter of generous breed and in good condition, as he always kept thirty of the first rate in his stud: he also maintained two packs of hounds, with the necessary huntsmen, whippers in, and other attendants. There was a smith at all times in attendance at the chace, with his budget of horse-shoes, &c., strapped before him. All these, dressed in scarlet and splendidly mounted, made a most imposing appearance in the field. But, Mr. Editor, *tempora mutantur*, not a vestige of that noble mansion now remains to mark the place on which it stood—of the ornamented parks, the woods, the lawns, once the seats of elegance and splendor, even the memory has almost passed away; the very name of its venerable and noble owner is never mentioned but by a few ancient and withered cottiers, when they contrast those days of noble and generous hospitality and plenty, with the present times of penury and want; and the condescension and kindness of the landlords, who then resided in the midst of their tenantry, with the overbearing insolence and griping avarice of the subalterns to whom they are now delivered over, bound hand and foot, by their selfish and heartless absentees. The remains of that much lamented nobleman are deposited in the family vault in Taughshinney churchyard, about a mile from Tenelick; over which tomb a pillar is erected, having on its pinnacle an urn entwined with serpents, emblematic of his lordship's wisdom. On the entablatures of this pillar is the following inscription:

"John, Lord Annaly, moved by the grateful remembrance of the honour conferred on him by his king and country, and by the pleasing recollection of the happiness which he enjoyed with his friends, in these delightful fields here adjoining, ordered, by his last will and testament, this column to be erected, as the tribute of a grateful mind. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' Terra hospita, vale."

Some years since, when riding through the townland of Cloncullen, in the vicinity of which Lord Annaly's mansion rose, my horse dropped a shoe; I hastened to a smithy in that neighbourhood, and on entering it perceived the vulcan of this rustic Lemnos, ycleped Paddy Gordon, exercising himself in repairing an axe for an old carpenter, named Larry Burke; a person who, from his conversation, appeared to have a very extensive knowledge of the surrounding country and its inhabitants of every class. Finding this man at once intelligent and communicative, I asked him several questions respecting the habits and pursuits of the neighbouring gentlemen—who were sportsmen?—who kept hounds? &c.

"Ah, Sir," said he, "the good ould times are gone by, when every gentleman had his deer-park, and his pack of hounds; but now there is neither one or the other to be seen, nor scarce a gentleman, let alone hounds and the like."

He then recounted the names of a number of places that had once been the residence of persons celebrated for their love of field sports; "but, above all, Sir," said he, "what brings tears into my ould eyes is the destruc-

tion iv the fine house and grand park iv Tenelick, that belonged to my Lord Annaly. There is not a glimpse of the house to be seen, and the park is let to freeholders, and, between you and I, Sir, I believe it is a real deer (deer) park to them. Oh but, Sir," continued he, "if you but knew that same Lord Annaly as well as I did, your heart would ache to look at the place, especially as you are a sportsman. I was always a little inclined that way myself, when young, and kept a brace of as good terriers as any in the county, and, I may say, it was them brought me acquainted with Lord Annaly. If yer honor 'ill be plazed, I'll tell you how I came to the knowledge of his lordship. Well, Sir, it happened one Christmas that the Lord Lieutenant, the Lord Chancellor, and other great lords come down to visit Lord Annaly, as they often did afore. Well, sure, the first diversion they took to was hunting, and off they all set from the county of Longford to Skea-hill, in the county of Westmeath, to look for a fox; for they say it is the greatest place at all for foxes. The day was fine, and, after drawing many covers, and striving for half the day to find one, Lord A. got wonderfully annoyed, and calls out to a crowd of men and gossoons that was standing by, and siz, 'is there any man among yez there that could find a fox to entertain my friends, and I'm the man that will reward him well?' On which a farrier iv the name iv Micky Farrell stept up and told his lordship, with submission, that he knew iv but two men in the three counties that could bate the world out for finding a fox. One iv them was Darby Lee, the rabbit-catcher; and the other was Larry Burke, the carpenter, who was at Mr. Fitzgerald's, at Churchtown, six miles off, mending some ould cars: (be the same token Farrell told a lie, for I'm a cabinet-maker by thrade, and was at that time making a chest iv drawers, and can do more nor any man iv the thrade iver could do afore me, by complatin' the work without any tool in the world, barrin' my hatchet, and with that same I can put on the locks and brasses in as good stile as ever Eagleson did, and a great man at the business he is: they say he is livin' in Dublin too; no doubt, Sir, you hard iv him.—But, to make a long story short, when Lord Annaly hard there was a man that could find a fox, 'Arrah,' siz his lordship, 'Micky, my good fellow, which is the rabbit catcher or Mr. Burke the most convanient?' Upon which Farrell ups and tells him that myself was the nearthest, and, what was betther nor that, that I was the real boy for the sport: on which his lordship ordered aw English groom to set off to Churchtown, like a Will-o'-the-wisp, 'and bring Mr. Burke,' as he was plazed to call me, 'without delay;' and it isn't that I say it, that oughtn't to say it, I ought to have a little more respect than another iv my sort. I was at that time, a dapper, purty-like man, wore a tie-wig, doe-skin small-clothes, and a buff belt, and active withal, as I could leap one and twenty feet, backward and forward on the surface iv the level earth. But what will you have of it, Sir? When the groom kem to Mr. Fitzgerald, he inquired for Larawence Burgoo, as he was plazed to call me, and so he ups and he tells me Lord Annaly's commands, axing me at the same time had I any convanieny about me for catchin' a fox.

"That's what I am never without, Sir,' siz I; 'look at them lads there,' (showing him a brace of good terriers lying under the bench where I was working; one of them was called Proudfoot and the other Rookaun), 'and, from what you tell me, his lordship must be in a hurry; so that I may be there the speedier, if you'll plaze to give me the horse you ride, I'll make no delay.'

"It's well done," siz he, and with that same he gives me the horse. Up I mounts and away with me, and never cried stop till I was furnent his lordship, among all the rest iv the great lords, with my two dogs at my heels. Well, Sir, you must know his lordship was a little short in the sight; and before I had time to let him know who I was,

"Pray, young man," siz he, 'where did you get tha horse; I am purty sure he is one iv mine?'

"Your lordship never was out yet,' siz I, takin' off my hat, and makin' a genteel bow; 'tis your lordship's horse and nobody else's. It was your groom gev him to

me, to be with you the speedier, to help your lordship to find a fox.'

"Is your name Burke?" siz he.

"Yes, my lord," siz I: 'one of the old Balydoogan stock.'

With that he tuck off his glove and sluck hands with me. It is azy to know where the gentleman is: an upstart musheroon wouldn't do that with the likes iv me, you know, Sir. And when I found he made so free with me, I swore by the bones of St. Patrick, that if there was a fox over or under Irish ground, I'd put him on foot before his lordship and all his noble company. With that same I turned round, and went over to some badger-holes that was nigh hand where we were all standing, and soon discovered that there was a fox in the earth, but that he was very deep down.

"The fellow that you're all day lookin' for is here, my lord," siz I; but he is farther down in the earth than I ever know'd a fox to be before.

"That's bad news," siz his lordship.

"Don't be afeard, my lord, siz I, 'for, if he was as deep down as Lough Drumon, (which all the world knows has no bottom,) I'll have him up.'

"While I was saying the word I pops in Proudfoot, and clapt my ear to the mouth iv the hole. I listened awhile, and knew, by the noise below, that he had the boy by the scruff of the neck: well I hard great hustling betwixt thim both, so I begun to think it would be a good way to send down both; so in I puts Rookawn to get houl't of Proudfoot of course. Well I waited a considerable time, and when I thought they were all stayin' too long, in I goes myself and gets houl't iv Rookawn by the tail. Lord Annaly, thinkin' that we all staid too long, comes in afthur us, and takes houl't iv myself by the feet; but to make a long story short, in comes the one half the present company in search of the other half; and sure enough it was their hands that was well tore with the grand spurs my Lord Annaly had on; so that's the way they were all draggin' one another, like a chain, till at last they all landed safe upon the surface of the level earth. And, sure enough, the shout that was set up by the miu and gossoons, when they seen ourselves once more in the face iv the day, bet the world hollow; and, by the same token, (added he, laying his hand on the right side of his head,) I have never had the right use iv my hearin' in this ear from that good day to this. But his lordship was as good as his word with regard to rewardin' me well, for he gave me a ten-guinea note on the spot, and ordered me to attend him on all sporting days in future, which I was happy to do while he lived, and, ferrier gare, (to my grief), that he's not alive to-day, and I wouldn't be the man that you see me, Sir, all as one as a stack iv rags." And as he said these words, he uttered a deep drawn sigh, and dropped a tear to the memory of his noble and generous patron.

At the conclusion of this narrative, to which, notwithstanding its whimsicality, I listened with deep attention, Gordon, the smith, laughed heartily, and said,

"Well, Larry, you have the impudence of ould Nick to call yourself a cabinet maker; tell the thruth, man; you know, at best, you was never betthur nor a hedge carpenter, and no great shakes either iv that. This is like the straddle you made for Mr. Nugent's two year ould mule. Don't you remember when you laid it on the ground, and said, 'Oh, Larry, jewel, who will you lay your hands to?' and at the same time it wid fit the Lord of Newcastle's big bull that was forty cwt.; and I think, after that, Sir, you may believe as much of his story as you plaze. But if you want to hear about huntin' and the likes, it's I that'll tell you the raal thrue story, and if you'll be plazed to hear it, it's little air (ear) you'll give to Larry Burke and his lies; aye, and it's to his face I say it, there's not a bigger liar from the sea to the Shannon. But, no matthur, Sir, I'll tell you the story.

"You must know my grandfather was a blacksmith as well as myself, and I often heard the neighbours say that there never was a lie hard out iv his mouth from the hour he came into the world; and though you may think the story strange, yit, comin' down from him, it must be thrue. It happened that every Saturday he used

to go to Athlone to sell locks and keys, and, one Friday night, my father, that was then a slip iv a gosson, was sittin' at the fire with his two little brothers; knowin' that the ould man would go to the market next day, they axed him to take their measure for three pair of brogues, as their feet was all cracked with the frost, the weather bein' very hard; so he did take it very exact with a bit of a kippeen, (stick), and after so doin', all iv a sudden a lump of a cat that was lyin' in the ash-hole, jump't up on the hob, and cocked his tail over his back, and every hair on him was standin' up like a hedge-hog, and his eyes like two blazing coals iv fire in his head. Well, in throth, they all wondered what haled (ailed) him at all, whin he attacked spakin' Irish for the bare life, and said to my grandfather,

"Arrah, then, good look to yer honor, and take my measure for a pair of pumps."

"At this the poor ould man and the gossoons was frighten-out iv their wits, and began to thrimble like any thing, and when my grandfather began to get over his fright a little,

"Oh, Sir!" siz he to the cat, (for he was afeard not to spake civil to him), I'll obey your orders, but I wouldn't know how to go about takin' your measure."

"Haven't you plenty of oatenmeal in the house?" siz the cat.

"Sure enough I have, Sir, goodness be praised, siz the ould man.

"Then make a lump of dough, and I'll lave the print iv my fut in it, and put it on the hob, and it'll be dhry in the mornin'."

"Well, so he did, and went to his bed, not knowin' what to make iv the cat; but, instead of sleepin', he tuck his bades and fell to prayin' as hard as he could lick, and never stopt till day-break in the mornin', when he set off for Athlone; and who should he meet in the way but Mr. Handcock's huntsman, and he ups and tells him the whole story, and the fright he was in.

"Wat," siz he, (for that was my grandfather's name,) if you'll bring me that cat in a bag on Saturday, I'll engage you I'll make him throw off his oatenmale pattens; for I've a pack iv hounds that'll chase him out of them, if he was ould Nick himself."

"Och, avich, siz my grandfather, how could I get him into the sack?"

"Tell him," siz the huntsman, 'that the brogue-maker couldn't make the brogues without seein' himself. Won't that do?"

"Sorra betther," siz the ould man, and off he goes, and standin' the market all day, he came home at night, vary enough, but the ne'r a pamp he brought the gossoons, becaze he hadn't a pair for the cat. 'Gud luck to yez all together,' siz he, as he came to the cabin-door. 'Don't be angry, any iv yez. The brogue-maker sez yez must all come into Athlone nixt Sathurday, and get your measure taken right.'

"And how am I to thravel?" siz the cat.

"Sir," siz he, 'I'll put you in the mouth iv the sack, wid a wad iv straw about you, to keep you dhry and clane; and the gossoons will come wid us for company.'

"Ah," siz the cat, lookin' mighty knowin' at my grand father, 'I'm afeard you'r playin' tricks on me.'

"And I think, Sir," observed Gordon, "he suspected all was not right."

"I want to know is Mr. Handcock at home, or is his lady at home, or is the huntsman at home, or any iv the family," continued the cat.

"I never axed a word about a mother's sowl iv them," says the ould man, 'or went that way at all at all.'

"Well, afther all, I believe your an honest ould buck," siz the cat, and that I can depind on you."

"You may depind your life on me," siz my grandfather.

"But for all the civil talk iv the cat, the poor ould man was sweatin' like a bull, (in favour to yé,) and shakin' like an aspin lafe, and thought that the nixt week was a year, till he'd get him out iv the house. Well, this all happened well and good; and the cat never spoke a word from that day out until Saturday kem, when, at the first peep in the mornin', what should my grandfather see but

ma bouchal, sittin abow (above) on the collar-beam, washing his face with his paws, to look sleek and purty for the journey. Well, the gossoons got ready iv coorse, and my poor grandfather put the locks and keys into the sack, and a wad iv sthraw on the top iv them for the cat; so he walked into the mouth iv the sack without the laste trouble in life, and the ould man tied it up courmagh and snug, and set off. Whin the cat felt him goin'—

“ ‘ Now,’ siz he, ‘ if I find you goin’ the road to Wellbrook, (Mr. Handcock’s residence) I’ll never forgive you, dead or alive.’ ”

“ ‘ Never fare, Sir,’ siz Wat, ‘ I never bethrayed any man yit, nor never will—you may thrust your life to me.’ ”

“ At the same time the ould fellow, cute enough, took the straight road to Wellbrook, where the huntsman promised to meet him. Well, though the cat could spake well enough, he couldn’t see through the bag what road they wor goin’, so he never felt himself till afther two miles thravellin’ they heard the yelp iv a hound: they stopt short, and the cat began to grow unazy in the sack, and, without more ado, he stuck his nails in my poor grandfather’s back, and roared out as loud as was in his head.

“ ‘ Wassa Watha (for your life Wat.)’ ”

“ ‘ What ails you avich?’ says Wat, lettin’ on that he didn’t know.

“ ‘ Wid that up comes the huntsman wid the whole pack iv hounds yelpin’ and snarlin’ about. The chap in the bag began to twist and to turn like a dhaudeel (a reptile like a leech,) and stuck his claws into the ould man’s back as far as ever he could.

“ ‘ Hard fortune to you and all your sort,’ siz my grandfather, takin’ courage, and flingin’ the sack in the road.

“ No sooner said nor done; for the weight iv the locks, d’ye see, Sir, burst the ould sack, and out hopt the cat, and maybe he didn’t take to his heels, and the hounds afther him as hard as they could leg. Well, sich a day’s sport wasn’t seen in the country from that blessed hour to this. Away they scampered across the country down to Kilkenny, from that to Clonmel, and from that to Sunday’s Well, near Ballymore; and when the hounds pressed close upon him, he dashed straight ahead into the loch. One Hanly, a fisherman, the heavens be his bed, was there in his boat the same day, and when he seen the cat divin’ like an otthor, he looked down to see what become iv him, an’ sure enough, (for he was a man that wudn’t tell no lie about it,) he seen him go down one iv the chimlies in the loch, (iv coorse, Sir, you’ve heard how the town iv Ballymore was dhrowned in the loch more nor a hundred years ago; and iv a clear day you can see the tops iv the houses.) ”

I expressed my ignorance of the circumstance.

“ Oh, dear, Sir, exclaimed Gordon in amazement, I thought all the world heerd iv the dhrownin’ of Ballymore.”

Then resuming his narrative in his usual tone, he said,

“ But, as I was tellin’ you, Sir, the cat run down one iv the chimlies as nimble as if he had a rat afore him, and tale or tidin’s never was heerd iv him since.”

Thus ended the tale of Mr. Paddy Gordon, the worthy and veracious rival of the equally worthy and veracious Mr. Larry Burke, of cabinet-making, fox-finding, and straddle-making fame. What their respective merits, as annalists of the events of the olden times may be, I cannot presume to judge. Perhaps some future historian, when searching out materials for the history of those days of hunting and hospitality, may derive benefit and information from your pages, should you think proper to give this a place in them; and I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
W. C. L.

Baby, the dwarf that lived with Stanislaus, the exiled King of Poland, was so diminutive that he was presented on a plate to be baptized, and for a long time lay in a slipper: at two years’ he was able to walk alone, and was then fitted with shoes that were about an inch and a half long: at the age of sixteen he was twenty-nine inches tall, and very beautiful, and from this period began to decline in health, and died in the twenty-second year of his age.



TRESPAN-ROCK, COUNTY OF WEXFORD.

On the road leading to the barony of Forth from Wexford, there lies a range of rocks, forming in themselves a very picturesque object, extending about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth; that part nearest the town is called Trespan rock, a subject worthy the study of the geologist. The formation is the kind of rock commonly called trapstone; the rock is upwards of sixty feet in height from the field in which it stands, and near the centre there is a chasm, or cut, about fifteen feet wide, dividing the rock from the summit to the base; and so perfect is the fracture, that wherever there is a projection on the one side, on the reverse is the cavity corresponding thereto; what is singular, the smaller part, or half of the rock, has actually sunk upwards of ten feet from the natural level. Besides the singularity in the formation of the rock, it is allied to one of the most memorable periods of Irish history, when this town sustained a siege, and was gallantly defended by Colonel David Synnot against the Parliamentarian army, under the command of Oliver Cromwell, in the month of October, 1648. Cromwell formed his camp on the rocks alluded to, part of which still retains his name. There is a tradition here, that when Captain Stafford, the governor, treacherously surrendered the castle to him, he marched his troops through the fissure in the rock, but whether that be the fact or not, so late as the summer of 1829 there could be traced the breast-work of a battery for four guns, erected by him on the top of Trespan rock; this has been effaced by the working of a quarry, from whence most of the stone now used in Wexford is drawn. A constant reader,
C. H. W.

Wexford, 1834.

WRITTEN ON A TOMBSTONE, WHERE IS LAID THE SKULL OF A WOMAN.

Blush not ye fair, to own me, but be wise,
Nor turn from sad Mortality your eyes.
Fame says, and Fame alone can tell how true,
I once was lovely and beloved like you.
Where are my vot’ries—where my flatt’rers now?
Gone with the subject of each lover’s vow.
Adieu the roses red and lillies white,
Adieu those eyes, which made the darkness light.
No more, alas! that coral lip is seen,
No longer breathes the fragrant gales between;
Turn from your mirror and behold in me,
At once what thousands can’t or dare not see.
Unvarnished I the real truth impart,
Nor here am plac’d but to direct the heart.
Survey me well, ye fair ones, and believe
The grave may terrify—but can’t deceive.
On beauty’s fragile base no more depend,
Here youth and pleasure, age and sorrow end;
Here drops the mask—here shuts the final scene,
Nor differs grave threescore from gay fifteen.
All press alike to that same goal, the tomb,
Where wrinkled Chloe smiles at Laura’s bloom.
When coxcombs flatter, and when fools adore,
Learn here the lesson to be vain no more.
Yet Virtue still against decay can arm,
And even lend Mortality a charm.

DUBLIN:

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